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4 May 1963

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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Syria-Egypt: The Baath socialist regime in Syria has precipitated a new crisis with Nasir by dismissing his supporters from the army and, in effect, forcing Nasirists to resign from the cabinet.

Nasir is likely to react by denouncing the Baathists and calling on pan-Arab elements to oust them. Thus far, however, Nasir's propaganda organs have been silent.

At the same time that they are attacking the Nasirists, the Syrian leaders are moving against conservative elements. All Syrian banks were nationalized on 2 May and several long-time moderate civil servants were dismissed from influential economic posts.

These moves, as well as recent decrees depriving old-line politicians of political rights, presumably are intended to undercut Nasir's appeal in Syria by demonstrating that the Baathists are genuine radicals.

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Ethiopia: Pressures for liberalization of Ethiopia's autocratic government may soon confront Emperor Haile Selassie with a major crisis.

A predominantly civilian conservative group led by the minister of defense and the president of the senate recently petitioned the Emperor to establish a constitutional monarchy. The group is believed also to have the support of the prime minister and two other ministers. Its members have little or no popular following in the country.

The conservatives apparently hope to forestall a move by more radical, predominantly military, elements which favor far-reaching changes. The radicals have the support of the army and air force commanders, three of the army's four division commanders, and two ministers.

Although local observers believe that a crisis will not occur until after the forthcoming African Summit Conference, which the Emperor is hosting in Addis Ababa from 23 to 25 May, either group might decide to move while the security forces are preoccupied with visiting dignitaries.

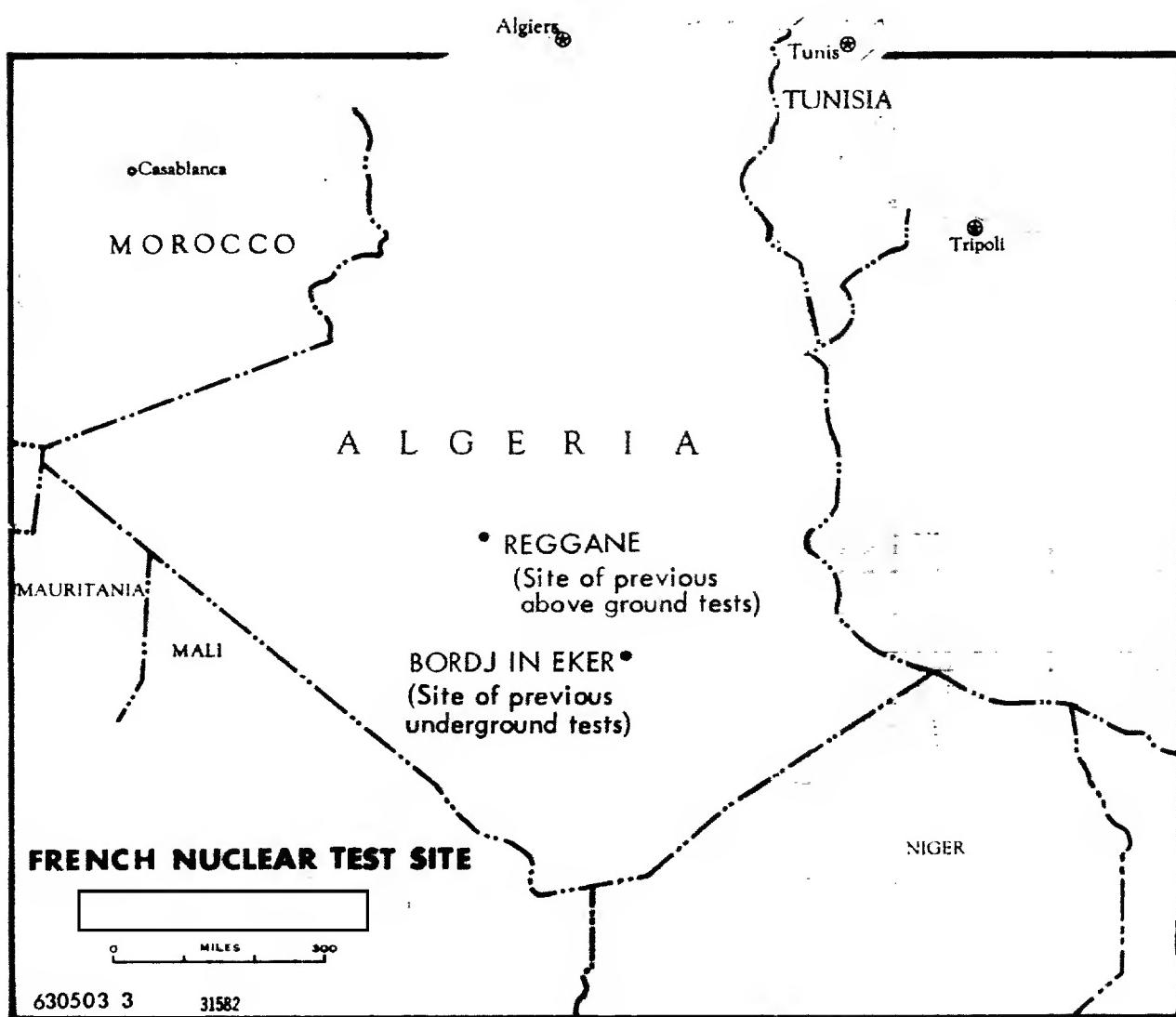
As he has in the past, the Emperor probably will seek to temporize by promising early reforms while trying to undermine and divide his antagonists.

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France:

[redacted] an underground French nuclear test in the
Sahara may be imminent. [redacted]

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[redacted] as many as three underground
tests may be held before the end of June. The joint
communiqué issued on 2 May by French and Alge-
rian representatives called for more rapid with-
drawal of French ground forces from Algeria but
did not specify any change in that section of the
Evian Accords which allows France use of the Sahara
test sites until July 1967. [redacted]

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